



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**For Immediate Release**

April 27, 2004

**LARGE-SCALE METHAMPHETAMINE ORGANIZATION DISMANTLED**

Jacksonville, Florida - United States Attorney Paul I. Perez today announced the return of an indictment against Israel Ardilla, age 30; Moises Ardilla-Tepetate, age 25; Samuel Ardilla, age 28; Jesus Campos-Reyes, age 36; and Hilarion Garcia-Arzate, age 53 charging them with conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine, distribution of methamphetamine, possession of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute it, and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. The maximum penalties the defendants face if convicted are a minimum mandatory term of 10 years' imprisonment up to life imprisonment, and a fine of \$4 million.

According to the indictment, the defendants were allegedly involved in a conspiracy to distribute a large quantity of methamphetamine in Hamilton and Hernando Counties. On April 16, 2004 Israel Ardilla, Samuel Ardilla, Jesus Campos-Reyes, and Hilarion Garcia-Arzate were arrested in Brooksville, Florida at the conclusion of a "buy-bust" operation, and were found in possession of approximately six pounds of methamphetamine and a portable methamphetamine laboratory. One of the defendants, Jesus Campos-

Reyes, was carrying a loaded handgun. The fifth defendant, Moises Ardilla-Tepetate, was arrested later that day in Jennings, Florida. He is alleged to have previously given a sample of methamphetamine to an individual cooperating with law enforcement, and had helped to arrange the transaction that led to the drug deal in Brooksville.

All five defendants were originally charged by federal complaint and had their initial appearances in Jacksonville on Saturday, April 17, 2004, before U.S. Magistrate Judge Howard T. Snyder. On April 21, 2004, the defendants were ordered to be detained pending trial. The defendants are citizens of Mexico and are believed to be illegally present in the United States. The defendants will be arraigned on the indictment today.

The methamphetamine seized from the defendants is one of the largest seizures of methamphetamine in this area. While methamphetamine is typically sold in gram quantities these defendants were apprehended with nearly three kilograms of methamphetamine.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Tri-County Narcotics Enforcement Task Force, the North Florida High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Task Force (HIDTA), the Brooksville Police Department, the Hernando County Sheriff's Office and the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, and will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Scot Morris.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.